



**December 7, 2018**

### **Medical Alert – Syphilis Update**

The increase in syphilis cases in the region is ongoing and the number of communities affected have increased. NWHU have been investigating cases in Kenora, Dryden, Fort Frances and a few smaller communities. Risk factors for syphilis include multiple sexual partners, sex worker, substance misuse, being under-housed or homeless, other sexually transmitted infections, MSM or a sexual partner of a high risk individual.

Northwestern Health Unit (NWHU) continues to do case and contact follow up, risk factor analysis, and have increased communication and programming to high risk groups.

#### **Please consider:**

- Testing for syphilis and other sexually transmitted infections for those who are at risk.
- Completing NWHU forms on any case you test/identify.
- Testing during pregnancy:
  - Universal screening of all pregnant women during the first trimester.
  - Screening test should be repeated at 28-32 weeks and again at delivery in women at high risk of acquiring syphilis. More frequent re-screening may be considered.
- Testing patients with a rash as this could be a sign of syphilis; the rash is typically on the palms, soles and flexor areas of extremities.
- Providing counselling to patients on importance of condoms and dental dams; these are available from NWHU at no charge for distribution through your clinic.
- Treatment for sexually transmitted infections can be made available at no charge; please contact NWHU to arrange for free medication through your clinic.
- Notifying Northwestern Health Unit if you suspect a diagnosis of syphilis.

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## **Resources**

### **Testing:**

[Syphilis Serology - Public Health Ontario](#)

[Syphilis serology testing update \(2017\) - Public Health Ontario](#)

[Syphilis - Chancre - Direct Fluorescence - Public Health Ontario](#)

[Syphilis - CSF - Public Health Ontario](#)

### **Treatment:**

[Canadian Guidelines on Sexually Transmitted Infections - Syphilis](#)

[2016 Updates to the Canadian Guidelines on Sexually Transmitted Infections](#)

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